chance of attaining not only relief from the inconvenience which the blockade of the river caused the Government, but also a tangible, not to say brilliant, success, afforded by a well-conceived and carefully-executed descent upon Cockpit Point, for instance, would certainly, it was urged, tempt any general who possessed a spark of the enterprise and resolution which are such essential constituents in the character of an able military leader.

Then, the unfortunate issue, on October 21st, of an exceedingly ill-judged and badly conducted movement across the Potomac at Ball's Bluff, by a portion of General Stone's (Federal) division, had a marked effect in awakening serious concern on the part of clear-headed observers in regard to the management of the army. **In** this affair, the troops behaved exceedingly well ; their defeat was due to the mistakes of the officers who directed the operation.

General McClellan unquestionably intended as late as the latter part of November, 1861, to advance directly upon the Confederate army, whether at Manassas or wherever he might find it. About this time, however, he began to consider several plans for removing the army to the lower Rappahannock or the neighborhood of Fortress Monroe, and he soon decided that one of these movements,—which one,

it was not necessary at that time to determine,—
would be far preferable to an advance on Richmond
by the direct or overland route. Then the roads,,
which up to the first of December had been good,,
began not long afterwards to feel the effects of the;
winter weather, and they BOOH became utterly im?-